

In What Economic Activities Does Henderson County Specialize?

A comparison of 1960 County employment distributions with those for the nation shows that Henderson County has higher concentrations of workers in these industries (in order): TEXTILES, PAPER, ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT, CHEMICALS, APPAREL, Private Household Work, and Agricultural work. In all these the County was 'overrepresented' by more than 40% relative to the nation. Other industries with above-average employment include: Construction, Truck Transportation, and Commercial Personal Services. (Although 1,462 workers were employed in retail business, the proportion was less than that for the nation, so, despite its size in employment, retail trade is not a local specialization.)

Most of the above specializations are generally considered 'basic' industries in that they are activities based on production of goods for an export (i.e., nonlocal) market. (The lone exception, Private Household Work, is an activity common to the South, where there is a pool of surplus unskilled Negro labor; together with Commercial Personal Services this does point up a basic industry, tourism.) As an economy matures and general income levels rise, there is a tendency for services to increase at a faster rate and for the basic industries to level off relatively. This has been the national trend, and this report projects a similar trend into the economic future of Henderson County.

Electrical Equipment:

The lighting fixtures industry is concentrated in New York, Ohio, Illinois, and California; the General Electric at Hendersonville has by far the largest lighting plant in this State, nearing the thousand mark in employment. Although the value of production of the industry doubled from 1947-1961, productivity per production man-hour increased by 78%, and total employment increased nationally by only 6%. It is expected that the local industry will continue its expansion in capital investment, raise productivity, raise income levels of workers, and increase in white collar and technical employment, rather than production workers.